# Data Quality Statement

## Summary information

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| Data asset name: | Groundwater Quality Restricted Use Zones (GQRUZ) |
| Date: | 2002 |
| Data asset owner: | Environmental Audit Unit, Quality Branch, Environment Protection Authority |
| Description of data asset: | This data asset covers Groundwater Quality Restricted Use Zones (GQRUZ) which are recommended by environmental auditors in EP Act 1970 section 53X environmental audits, following clean up to the extent practicable (CUTEP) determinations. GQRUZ were identified by EPA by invoking clause 19 of the State Environment Protection Policy (SEPP) Groundwaters of Victoria (GoV) and clause 58 of SEPP Waters. The purpose of identifying a GQRUZ and publishing this information online is to alert potential users of groundwater to the presence of contamination and list the uses for which the groundwater is not suitable for (without prior testing to confirm suitability).  The GQRUZ is provided in the form of a polygon on a map, a pdf showing the extent of the GQRUZ and a list of the uses groundwater is not suitable for without prior testing (precluded beneficial uses of groundwater). The information has historically been displayed on EPA’s website and is currently available on Victoria Unearthed website.  Post 1 July 2021, SEPP Waters was revoked, and EPA does not have a current policy or process to identify GQRUZ under the EP Act 2017. However, in accordance with EPA publication 2001 under the EP Act 2017, environmental auditors are to document areas of remaining groundwater contamination post clean up so far as reasonably practicable (CUSFARP) determinations in s208 environmental audits. Note: a project is currently underway to allow EPA to continue sharing areas of known contaminated groundwater via a GQRUZ polygon and pdf map under the EP Act 2017. |
| Legislation and authority: | EP Act 1970, SEPP GoV and SEPP Waters |
| **Scope and coverage:** | This data asset is information on areas of known groundwater contamination at sites across Victoria. The information source is only from s53X environmental audits under the EP Act 1970. No information of known groundwater contamination outside of s53X environmental audits is captured formally through a GQRUZ. The information is intended for public information sharing purposes. |
| **Reference period:** | Data on GQRUZ has been collected and published from 2002 to 30 June 2021.  EPA does not have a current policy to identify GQRUZ under the EP Act 2017. Therefore, any GQRUZ recommendations in S53X environmental audits post 1 July 2021 have not been published. Similarly, any discussions of contaminated groundwater remaining post CUSFARP in s208 audits have not been identified by EPA. |
| **Frequency and timing:** | Before the introduction of SEPP Waters in October 2018, GQRUZ recommendations in S53X environmental audits were identified by EPA following review by Environmental Audit Unit, within a couple of months of an audit report submission. Between mid-2019 to 2022, due to IBIS systems issues, no auditor determined CUTEP GQRUZ were published to the EPA website or Vic Unearthed. Since 1 July 2021, no GQRUZ have been identified by EPA under the EP Act 2017. |
| **Formats available:** | PDF file, polygon and text on web map  Note: for GQRUZ records following the introduction of SEPP Waters 2018 while the EP Act 1970 was still in force (i.e., mid 2019 to 30 June 2021), only a polygon and text on a web map are available. A project is currently underway by EPA to build a solution to create the accompanying pdf file. |
| **Other notes:** | The information to support the auditor’s recommendation of a GQRUZ is detailed in a s53X environmental audit, in accordance with EPA guidance, Publication 840 – Clean up and management of polluted groundwater. Information on GQRUZ (Information bulletin, EPA publications 862) and groundwater clean up (Information bulletin, EPA publications 840) provided to environmental auditors and the community since 2002.  Areas of groundwater contamination known to EPA outside s53X audits have not historically been captured through a formal GQRUZ identification process. Therefore, following creation of the GQRUZ policy framework under the EP Act 2017 (process to be completed within the next 12 months), a backlog of groundwater contamination information from EP Act 2017 s208 audits, non-transitioned EP Act 1970 environmental audits and outside the audit system will be required to be captured and published.  Note there are systems improvements and IT work currently underway to include links to the environmental audit reports and site history information for GQRUZ records following the introduction of SEPP Waters 2018 while the EP Act 1970 was still in force (i.e., mid 2019 to 30 June 2021). |

## Data quality description

### Accuracy

The accuracy of the data is very high. This is because the recommendation for a GQRUZ is provided in s53X environmental audit reports, completed by EPA appointed environmental auditors. An environmental auditor presents lines of evidence in their audit report to support the recommended GQRUZ extent in line with EPA Publication 840.

### Completeness

The completeness of this data is low. There have been significant impacts to the completeness to this dataset. Following the introduction of SEPP Waters in October 2018, EPA’s CRM, IBIS, was not updated to accommodate changes in terminology. Therefore, no GQRUZ from auditor determined CUTEPs were identified and published by EPA from approximately mid-2019. As part of a Victoria Unearthed harmonisation project in mid-2022, a total of 222 ‘backlog’ GQRUZ records are to be published to Victoria Unearthed, pending an IT solution.

No GQRUZ have been identified under EP Act 2017 as SEPP Waters was revoked, EPA does not have a current policy on GQRUZ determinations under the new legislative framework.

### Representative

The representativeness of the data is high. The extent of each GQRUZ is determined by groundwater analytical data collected at a specific audit site as well as modelling of maximum plume extents.

### Timeliness/Currency

The timeliness and currency of data has been very low after mid-2019 to present. This is because IBIS was not upgraded to accommodate terminology changes to SEPP Waters and issues with EPA website outages. Known areas of groundwater contamination outside the audit system have not been communicated.

### Collection

The consistency of collection of data has been very high. This is because guidance to environmental auditors has been provided since 2002 in the form of information bulletins under the EP Act 1970 on GQRUZ (EPA Publication 862) and clean up and management of polluted groundwater (EPA Publication 840). Guidance under the EP Act 2017 on the clean up and management of contaminated groundwater, including documenting areas of remaining groundwater contamination post CUSFARP has been provided in EPA publication 2001.

### Consistency

The consistency of collection of data has been high. The data has been presented in s53X environmental audit reports under the EP Act 1970 and s208 environmental audit reports under the EP Act 2017.

### Fit for purpose

The data is fit for the specific purpose for which it was intended.

# Disclaimer

This data asset is provided “as is”, without warranty to the suitability of the data for unspecified use. The burden of assessment of fitness of the data lies completely upon the user.

# For further information

For further information regarding this data quality statement please contact Environmental Audit Unit, Quality Branch, EPA at [environmental.audit@epa.vic.gov.au](mailto:environmental.audit@epa.vic.gov.au).

# Document control

## Version history

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| Version | Date | Comments |
| 0.1 | 22/11/2022 | 1st Draft |
| 1.0 | 30/06/2023 | Incorporated feedback. Final draft. |
| 1.1 | 19/07/2023 | Added statement referencing ongoing data improvements underway in the “other notes” field. |